



COMMISSION ON THE NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVES

FACT SHEET

MISSION

The independent Commission on the National Guard and Reserves is charged by Congress to recommend any needed changes in law and policy to ensure that the National Guard and Reserves are organized, trained, equipped, compensated, and supported to best meet the national security requirements of the United States. This charge was contained in the Ronald W. Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005. An additional requirement to make recommendations on legislatively-proposed changes to the National Guard was assigned to the Commission by the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007.

KEY ISSUES REQUIRING REVIEW

Among the questions the Commission is addressing under its original charter from FY 2005:

- **Roles and Missions** – What are the appropriate roles and purposes of the National Guard and Reserves in meeting the national security needs of the United States?
- **Capabilities** – How can reserve components and personnel best be used to support Armed Forces operations and achievement of national security objectives, including homeland defense, while at the same time meeting disaster response objectives?
- **Operational Support** – How effective is the Department of Defense plan to implement the new personnel accounting category which has been developed to properly account for reserve members on active duty in support of total force missions?
- **Organization and Structure** – How effective are the current organization and structure of the National Guard and Reserves? Are Department of Defense and individual service plans for the future organization and structure of the National Guard and Reserves adequate?
- **Training** – Are the current organization and funding of training adequate? What changes are needed to achieve training objectives and operational readiness?
- **Readiness** – How effective are policies and programs for achieving operational readiness – troops trained and equipment on hand, maintained, and functioning – as well as personnel readiness, including medical and family readiness?
- **Personnel Compensation and Benefits** – Are compensation and benefits, including the availability of health care benefits and health insurance, appropriate and adequate? For both regular and reserve components of the Armed Forces, what are the likely effects of proposed compensation and benefit changes? What are feasible options for improving compensation and benefits, particularly in regard to cost-effectiveness and any foreseeable effects on readiness, recruitment, and retention of personnel?
- **Career Paths** – How effective are traditional military career paths? Are there alternative career paths that could enhance professional development and help move personnel toward a continuum of service?
- **Funding** – How adequate is the funding provided for equipment and personnel in both active duty and reserve military personnel accounts? How can funding best be provided?
- **Other** – What other issues relevant to the purposes of the Commission will be included in its assessment?

Among the questions the Commission is addressing in response to the FY 2007 law:

- **Legislative Proposals** – Is it advisable and feasible to implement the provisions of two legislative proposals – S. 2658 and H.R. 5200 – which would, among other things, increase the responsibilities of the National Guard Bureau (NGB) within the Department of Defense, expand the role and raise the rank of the Chief of the NGB to general, make the Chief a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, give the NGB more influence in the Pentagon's budget process, and elevate the role of the National Guard at U.S. Northern Command?
- **Chief of National Guard Bureau** – Is it advisable and feasible to permit the Chief of the NGB to hold the rank of general in the current NGB organization as an alternative to giving the Chief a seat on the Joint Chiefs of Staff with the rank of general?

- **H.R. 5122, Section 544** – Is it advisable and feasible to implement the provisions of section 544 of H.R. 5122, which would permit activated National Guard officers to serve in both state and federal status as a means of achieving unity of command over units composed of both active duty and National Guard personnel?
- **DoD Processes** – How adequate are Department of Defense processes for defining the equipment and funding necessary for the National Guard to meet its statutory responsibilities, including homeland defense and related missions?

COMMISSIONERS

As specified in the authorizing statute, 13 Commission members were appointed by the chairs and ranking members of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees and the Secretary of Defense. Appointed are:

- **Arnold L. Punaro, Chairman** – Chairman Punaro is a retired Marine Corps major general who served as Commanding General of the 4th Marine Division (1997-2000) and Director of Reserve Affairs at Headquarters Marine Corps during the post-9/11 peak reserve mobilization periods. Following active duty service in Vietnam, he was mobilized three times: for Operation Desert Shield in the first Gulf War, to command Joint Task Force Provide Promise (Fwd) in Bosnia and Macedonia, and for Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003. He worked on Capitol Hill for 24 years for Senator Sam Nunn and served as his Staff Director of the Senate Armed Services Committee for 14 years. He is currently Executive Vice President of Science Applications International Corporation.
- **William L. Ball, III** – Commissioner Ball is currently Managing Director of The Loeffler Group, a government affairs practice in Washington, D.C. and Texas. He also serves as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Asia Foundation, an international NGO operating in 18 Asian countries. He served in the Navy for six years followed by 10 years service on the U.S. Senate staff for Senators Herman Talmadge and John Tower. He joined the Reagan Administration in 1985, serving as Assistant Secretary of State for Legislative Affairs, Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs at the White House, and Secretary of the Navy in 1988-1989.
- **Les Brownlee** – Commissioner Brownlee was confirmed as the Under Secretary of the Army in November 2004 and served concurrently as the Acting Secretary of the Army from May 2003 to November 2004. He was appointed by both Senators Strom Thurmond and John Warner to serve as the Staff Director of the Senate Armed Services Committee. He is retired from the United States Army and served two tours in Vietnam. He is currently President of Les Brownlee & Associates LLC.
- **Rhett B. Dawson** – Commissioner Dawson is currently President and CEO of the Information Technology Industry Council. He is the former Senior Vice President, Law and Public Policy, for the Potomac Electric Power Company. During the last two years of the Reagan Administration, he was an Assistant to the President for Operations. He also served as Staff Director of the Senate Armed Services Committee. He served on active duty as a ROTC-commissioned Army officer from 1969 to 1972.
- **Larry K. Eckles** – Commissioner Eckles retired as the Assistant Division Commander of the 35th Infantry Division, headquartered at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, after 37 years of service. He retired with over 31 years of full-time civil service employment with the Nebraska Army National Guard and has served in numerous positions at state headquarters including Chief of Staff of the Nebraska Army National Guard, battalion commander, and Director of Personnel.
- **Patricia L. Lewis** – Commissioner Lewis served over 28 years with the federal government, including service with the Senate Armed Services Committee for Chairmen John Warner, Sam Nunn, and Scoop Jackson. Ms. Lewis began her federal career in 1975 with the Department of the Navy and has held positions in Naval Sea Systems Command, the Office of the Navy Comptroller, and in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. She is currently a partner with Monfort-Lewis, LLC.
- **Dan McKinnon** – Commissioner McKinnon was founder, Chairman, and CEO of North American Airlines. He undertook special projects for the Director of Central Intelligence and also served as Chairman of the Civil Aeronautics Board, during which time he implemented airline deregulation. He has owned radio stations in San Diego. Early in his career, he spent four years in the United States Navy as an aviator where he set, and holds, the U.S. Navy helicopter peacetime air/sea record of 62 saves.

- **Wade Rowley** – Commissioner Rowley is currently a Military Border Infrastructure Construction Consultant with the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Customs and Border Protection. He served over 23 years with the California Army National Guard and Army Reserves. His last military assignment was with the California Army National Guard, where he served as an Engineer Officer, Company Commander, and Facility Commander for the California National Guard Counterdrug Task Force in support of the U.S. Border Patrol.
- **James E. Sherrard III** – Commissioner Sherrard served as Chief of Air Force Reserve, Headquarters USAF, Washington, DC and Commander, Air Force Reserve Command, Robins AFB, Georgia from 1998 to 2004. He is a retired lieutenant general with more than 38 years of commissioned service in the United States Air Force. As Chief of Air Force Reserve and Commander, Air Force Reserve Command, he was responsible for organizing, training, and equipping more than 79,000 military and civil service personnel required to support operations and combat readiness training for 36 flying wings, 14 detached groups, 13 Air Force Reserve installations, three Numbered Air Forces, and the Air Reserve Personnel Center (ARPC). As Chief of Air Force Reserve, he directed and oversaw the mobilization of Air Force Reserve personnel in support of military operations in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq. During his career, General Sherrard commanded an airlift group, two Air Force Reserve installations, two wings, and two Numbered Air Forces.
- **Donald L. Stockton** – Commissioner Stockton owns and has operated for over 32 years the Marshfield Drayage Company, a regional trucking company in Southwest Missouri. He retired as a lieutenant colonel from the U.S. Air Force Reserves, where he served nearly 30 years. For almost 25 years he commanded various flights and squadrons, was deputy commander for resources, and subsequently was deputy commander for support of the 943rd Airlift Wing at March Air Force Base in California. His last command was with the 934th Maintenance Squadron, a subordinate unit of the 934th Airlift Wing, Air Force Reserve, in Minneapolis, where he was responsible for the unit's C-130E aircraft and training of some 175 reservists. For the Reserve Officers Association of the United States (ROA), he is immediate past national Air Force vice president, a past president, and currently national councilman for the Missouri Department.
- **E. Gordon Stump** – Commissioner Stump retired in January 2003 from his position of Adjutant General and the Director of Military and Veterans Affairs in Michigan after serving for 12 years. He commanded and directed a total of 157 Army and Air National Guard units, two Veterans Nursing Homes, and 12 Veterans Service Organizations. His prior assignments included Squadron Commander 107th TFS and Commander and Deputy Commander of the Headquarters Michigan Air National Guard. He flew 241 combat missions over North and South Vietnam. He also deployed to South Korea during the Pueblo Crisis. He served as President of the National Guard Association of the United States and as a member of the Reserve Forces Policy Board. Prior to his assignment as Adjutant General, he was Vice President of Automotive Engineering for Uniroyal Goodrich Tire Co. He is currently President of Strategic Defense Associates, LLC.
- **J. Stanton Thompson** – Commissioner Thompson is currently an Executive Director for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency. He is a retired naval rear admiral with over 35 years of military service. He is the former Special Assistant for Reserve Matters to the Commander, U.S. NORTHCOM and North American Aerospace Command. He also served as a principal advisor to the commander for maritime homeland defense. During his recall to active duty, he provided active duty support to Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

TIMETABLE AND ACTIVITIES

- **March 2006** – First official meeting of the Commission
- **June 2006** – Ninety-day report outlining strategic work plan, planned activities, and initial findings submitted to the House and Senate Armed Services Committees and the Secretary of Defense
- **March 2007** – Report on additional issues assigned to the Commission by the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 submitted to the House and Senate Armed Services Committees
- **January 2008** – Final report to include recommended reforms in legislation and Defense Department policies submitted to the House and Senate Armed Services Committees and the Secretary of Defense
- **April 2008** – Commission terminated

KEY BACKGROUND EVENTS

Throughout its history, the United States has addressed issues related to the proper roles and missions of its National Guard and Reserves – issues affecting appropriate levels of preparedness to respond to national security threats, natural disasters, and other demands, both at home and abroad; sources and levels of funding; and balance of control between federal and state authorities. Today's reserve structure has been shaped to a great extent by events that have occurred, legislation that has been enacted, and policies that have been implemented in the last half-century. For example:

- **Armed Forces Reserves Act of 1952** – This Act designated three groups of reservists – Ready, Standby, and Retired – each with different mobilization and readiness requirements. It identified seven reserve components: Air National Guard, Army National Guard, Coast Guard Reserve, U.S. Navy Reserve, U.S. Army Reserve, U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, and U.S. Air Force Reserve. This is the structure of the reserve components today.
- **Total Force Policy** – Following the 1970 report of the Gates Commission, both the active and reserve components shifted from a combination of conscription and volunteers to an all-volunteer force. In 1973, Defense Secretary James Schlesinger implemented the Total Force Policy which had been developed by his predecessor, Melvin Laird. In the Total Force concept, active forces and Guard and Reserve forces are viewed as a single force when considering how best to meet national security requirements. This policy moved more military assets to the reserve components, with the goals of maximizing capability and minimizing costs during peacetime and reducing the time needed for the reserves to mobilize in support of military operations during wartime and other events. Both the Total Force Policy and the all-volunteer force remain in effect today.
- **Abrams Doctrine** – In the early 1970s, General Creighton Abrams, then Army Chief of Staff, called for the military support units that would be required in any major engagement to exist exclusively in the reserves. General Abrams believed that it was essential to have the support of the nation in wartime, and that utilization of the nation's Guard and Reserve components was essential to developing that support.
- **Total Force Policy Study Group** – The end of the Cold War had profound effects on the nation's military, and the appropriate balance of active and reserve forces was again questioned. This group, commissioned in 1990, recommended that the capabilities of active and reserve components not be mirror images of one another; what was needed, they reported, were complementary capabilities that could be leveraged for success.
- **Other Actions, War on Terror, Disaster Response** – The organization and structure of the nation's modern reserve components date from Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm. U.S. military actions in the Persian Gulf, Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Iraq prior to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the nation, and in Afghanistan and Iraq following the attacks, have significantly increased the operational tempo of the National Guard and Reserves. Approximately 400,000 Guard and Reserve members were mobilized between the first Gulf War and 9/11; more than 590,000 Guard and Reserve members were mobilized between 9/11 and early February 2007.

Taken together, these actions, combined with unprecedented homeland security commitments and continuing disaster response responsibilities, underscore the need for an independent, comprehensive review of the current use of the Guard and Reserves and the issues affecting members. Their deployment in the aftermath of the Gulf Coast hurricanes is the most recent reminder of the range of demands they are called upon to meet.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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